

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 701, CON- SERVATION AND REINVESTMENT ACT

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today a Dear Colleague letter will be sent to all Members informing them that the Rules Committee is planning to meet the week of May 8 to grant a rule which may limit the amendment process on H.R. 701, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, also known as CARA.

Any Member who wishes to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 8, to the Committee on Rules in Room H-312 of the Capitol.

Amendments should be drafted to the text of an amendment in the nature of a substitute which is available at the Committee on Resources and will be posted on their Web site by 12 noon tomorrow.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain that their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

EAST TIMOR REPATRIATION AND SECURITY ACT

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and revise and extend his remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to join with my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), to introduce H.R. 4357, the East Timor Repatriation Security Act.

The crisis in East Timor continues, and the Congress needs to respond. Some 100,000 refugees remained trapped in squalid and threatening conditions inside West Timor. The overwhelming majority of these refugees want to return to their home in East Timor, but they cannot because the camps are under the control of the militias.

The militias and elements of the Indonesian Army continue cross-border attacks into East Timor.

Reconstruction continues to be a slow and laborious task.

Our bill maintains Congressional restrictions and the President's suspension on military cooperation with the Indonesian Armed Forces until the refugees are safely repatriated and military attacks against East Timor are ended.

It calls upon the President to help the safe repatriation of the refugees and to help rebuild East Timor, and it salutes the members of the United

States Armed Forces who have participated in the peacekeeping operation in East Timor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the McGovern-Smith bill on East Timor.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following for the RECORD:

[From Human Rights Watch]

EAST TIMORESE REFUGEES FACE NEW THREAT

(NEW YORK, Mar. 30, 2000).—Human Rights Watch today called on Indonesian authorities to lift a March 31 deadline on humanitarian aid to East Timorese refugees living in West Timor. The Indonesian government has given the refugees, some 100,000 people, until the end of the month to choose whether to go back to East Timor or remain in Indonesia. Indonesia says it will end all delivery of food and other assistance as of March 31.

"Everyone wants a quick resolution of the refugee crisis, but this ultimatum is counterproductive," said Joe Saunders, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The threatened deadline alone has created panic. If it is implemented, the cutoff will directly endanger the lives of tens of thousands of refugees without solving the underlying problems."

Conditions for many of the refugees are already dire. There have been food shortages, along with health and nutrition problems in many of the camps. Some reports estimate that as many as 500 refugees have died from stomach and respiratory ailments. Refugees also continue to face significant obstacles in deciding whether to return. In some areas, refugees continue to be subjected to intimidation by armed militias and disinformation campaigns. Refugees are told that conditions in East Timor are worse than in the camps, and the United Nations is acting as a new colonial occupying force. Other refugees opposed independence for East Timor, or come from militia or army families, and fear vigilante justice should they return to East Timor.

Indonesian officials claim, however, that they can no longer afford to feed the refugees, that food aid acts as a magnet and prevents refugees in West Timor from returning home permanently, claiming that after March 31, the refugees should be the sole responsibility of the international community.

"Given Indonesia's economic woes, the call for international financial support in feeding and caring for the refugees is understandable. We call on donors to make urgently needed assistance available. But an artificial deadline helps no one," said Saunders. "Thousands of refugees are not now in a position to make a free and informed choice about whether to return. A large part of the problem has been Indonesia's failure to create conditions in which refugees can make a genuine choice."

According to aid agencies, the total number of refugees currently in West Timor is just under 100,000. Precise figures are not available because access to the camps and settlements has been limited by harassment and intimidation of humanitarian aid workers by pro-Indonesian militias still dominant in a number of the camps. Many refugees have also been subjected to months of disinformation and, often, intimidation by members of the pro-Indonesian militias. Indonesia has recently made some progress in combating the intimidation in the camps, but lack of security and reliable information continue to be important obstacles to return. Aid workers in West Timor estimate that one-half to two-thirds of the refugees, if given a free choice, would eventually choose to return to East Timor.

"Withdrawal of food aid and other humanitarian assistance should never be used as a means to pressure refugees into returning home prematurely" said Saunders. "Return should be voluntary and based on the free and informed choice of the refugees themselves."

Following the announcements by the United Nations on September 4, 1999 that nearly eighty percent of East Timorese voters had rejected continued rule by Indonesia, East Timor was the site of orchestrated mayhem. In the days and weeks following the announcement, an estimated seventy percent of homes and buildings across East Timor were destroyed, more than two-thirds of the population was displaced, and an estimated 250,000 East Timorese fled or were forcibly taken, often at gunpoint, across the border into Indonesian West Timor. To date, roughly 150,000 refugees have returned to East Timor.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 29, 2000]

STUMBLING EFFORTS IN EAST TIMOR

In East Timor, where pro-Indonesian militias went on a rampage last summer, the United Nations has taken on an ambitious reconstruction mission with inadequate means. Not surprisingly, the results to date have been disappointing. Unless faster progress can be achieved in creating jobs, resettling refugees and establishing the rule of law, there is a serious risk of new violence.

International peacekeepers belatedly put a stop to the violence, which came after the East Timorese voted for independence. But by the time U.N. administrators moved in six months ago, conditions were desperate. Pro-Jakarta militias had burned much of the territory's housing and destroyed its agricultural economy. The abrupt withdrawal of Indonesian civil servants left East Timor without police, teachers and other essential services.

Since then the U.N. has made only modest progress. Some schools have been reopened, although they still lack trained teachers. Emergency medical and dental clinics have been established, many of them staffed by private relief agencies. But a staggering 80 percent of East Timor's 800,000 people still have no work, and nearly 100,000 remain in refugee camps across the Indonesian frontier. There is no functioning police force or courts, no reliable water, power or transportation systems.

The chief U.N. administrator, Sergio Vieira de Mello, has been hampered by an inadequate budget, unrealistic staff ceilings and the slowness of donor nations in providing the funds and volunteers they have promised for Timor's reconstruction. Of more than \$500 million pledged late last year, only \$40 million has been delivered. Washington has so far sent about \$8 million of the \$13 million it promised for U.N. and World Bank reconstruction efforts. Donor nations have been slow in providing the local governance experts the U.N. needs.

These problems have been magnified by the workings of the notoriously slow U.N. bureaucracy and the U.N. mission's reluctance to give more responsibility to local residents. If the rebuilding effort continues to lag in the months ahead, Jakarta could be tempted to exploit the continuing poverty and chaos, launching new military forays from Indonesian-controlled West Timor.

Last summer's violence in East Timor galvanized international attention and action. That commitment must now be sustained with adequate resources and a renewed sense of urgency.